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The Return of the Battleship Fleet.

It was a dazzling, roaring reception which the big battleship fleet received at Hampton Roads on its return from its cruise round the world,—such a reception as only President Roosevelt knows how to give, with his boyish exuberance of spirit, to a collection of huge fighting craft, to him the highest symbol of strength, security and honor.

The cruise of the fleet has, from the material point of view, been a striking success. It has gone round the world without an accident. It has been a great display of power. It has shown to what remarkable perfection the construction and handling of ships have been brought, and what wonders can be wrought by highly trained men in coöperation. As a world-spectacle, impressive to the eye and the imagination, it has been without parallel on the oceans.

But aside from this, what has the cruise accomplished worth the time and expense that it has cost? Simply nothing. It was not needed to convince the world of the power of the nation. That was conceded already in every quarter of the globe. It was not needed for the purposes of training in the art of handling ships in mass. That could have been done as well off our own shores at vastly less expense.

It was not needed to give us the fame of having first sent a big fleet of battleships round the earth. For such glory as that children struggle. It was not needed to make the nations beware of attacking us. None of them had the remotest intention or secret desire to do so. It was not needed to convince the nation that the Atlantic Coast was in danger of attack with the battleships away. There was not and never had been any such danger. It was not needed to prove that our Pacific Coast is in danger of attack without a formidable fleet to defend it. There is not the shadow of any such danger. Nor was it needed to suppress in Japan a deep-seated purpose to attack as soon as practicable our Western Coast. Japan had no such purpose, as has been proved in every conceivable way.

What purpose, then, had the cruise in view? Nobody seems to know except President Roosevelt, and "he won't tell." Admiral Evans has recently stated that he does not know why the fleet was sent round the world. The only possible conclusion is, taking everything into consideration, that it was done to boom the navy, and to secure from Congress the carrying out of the Executive's Big Navy Program. Some prominent men in Washington say that it was purely from love of pyrotechnics. And we admit that there might have been a mixture of motives.

We called attention, at the time when the cruise began, to the mischief which it was certain to do. It has done all this, and more, too. It inflamed the imagination of the Brazilians when it paraded before Rio Janeiro, and the Brazilian Parliament has voted to build thirty-five war vessels, three of them Dreadnoughts. It stirred up the fears and the dormant fighting instincts of the Argentines, and the Argentine Congress has voted to spend \$75,000,000 in rebuilding its fleet as soon as its disarmament treaty with Chile expires this spring. The Australians fell under its spell, and the Parliament of the Australian Confederation has voted, with the approval of the British Admiralty, to spend \$6,000,000 in creating the nucleus of an Australian navy. These countries all long to be big, like Uncle Sam. Possibly the suspicion arose in the "back part" of their souls that some day a United States battlefleet might visit them on some other errand than that of a "peaceful cruise," and that they must be "ready." Does anybody imagine that Japan, after the visit of this fleet, and her passionately friendly reception of it, will be

less likely to resume the building of battleships than she was before? Or does any one cherish the hope that Great Britain, Germany, France or Russia will cut down their naval programs by a single gunboat because we have demonstrated to them how big and terrible we can be on the sea?

No; the whole naval craze of the world has been deepened and strengthened by this cruise, and unless other influences counteract the mischief that has been done, as we sincerely hope they may, we shall have to pay the penalty in the years to come in increased naval budgets, and in more frequent differences with other countries and more distressing suspicions and alarms of war, like the humiliating and disgraceful one that has been passing over our western shore.

There is one possible way in which the outcome of the cruise may be made to work mightily for the cause of peace, if the government at Washington is only wise in its generation. The fleet has reported from the ports visited that the people and the governments are all our friends, that we have no enemies. If this be true, what is the use to maintain a great growing naval establishment against enemies that do not exist and dangers that will never come? The logical thing to do, therefore, under the circumstances, would seem to be for the government to order at least a part of the great fleet put out of commission at the earliest possible moment. Such a step would probably be welcomed everywhere with enthusiasm quite as great as that which met the big ships on their trip round the world.

The Lincoln Centenary.

At no time since his death, forty-four years ago, has the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth been observed so universally and with such depth and warmth of affection as this year. About all the excellent things that can be said of any man have been said, and for the most part truly said, of him.

While this laudation has been going on, we have been asking ourselves over and over what particular thing above all others the great martyr President would say to his countrymen if he were among us to-day. And we have seemed to see him standing, with his strong, sad, furrowed face turned toward the Pacific Coast, and saying:

Beware of race conceit, prejudice and injustice. "Equality of rights is the first of rights." Remember the fearful penalty which the nation once had to pay for its denial and suppression of the rights of a people whom it had brought by force from over sea and reduced to bondage. The penalty for injustice may come late, but it must always at last be paid. You desire your country to be foremost among the nations of the earth. That is a laudable desire. But a country cannot be truly great

and honored unless it is righteous, just, beneficent; unless it gives its strength and wealth not for itself alone, but also for the help and uplifting of those who have not yet come into the full possession of their rights and the full enjoyment of their capacities of growth and development. Greatness and honor lie along this pathway. Give every people, every nation a full and fair chance. Put no obstacles in the way of any. Lend a hand to all. Thus doing, you will have preserved your strength unimpaired and your honor unsullied.

You desire to live in friendship and peace with all the nations. To do this you must first of all have a right spirit toward all—a spirit of fairness, of generosity, of patience, of appreciation, of trust, of friendship. These constitute the very foundation of the temple of world peace, of which you are now talking so much, and which you are striving to help build. You have done much; do more. Let not the ancient spirit of equality and fraternity die out from among you. Without this spirit, battleships and fortifications will not be able to retain for you the respect and homage of the Oriental nations. With this spirit sincerely and freely and constantly exercised, there will be little need of these instruments of terror. Respect and friendship do not come at the call of booming guns and flashing explosives. If you wish the love and respect of the other peoples and nations, you must first love and respect them.

In some such terms as these would the great soul of Abraham Lincoln pour itself out in warning and pleading at sight of the exhibitions of race prejudice and exclusiveness to which we have recently been treated on our Western shore and in other parts of the country. It is to be hoped that the white fires of high humane sentiment which the Lincoln Centenary has kindled throughout the land will have consumed away all the base and unworthy race feeling which has recently manifested itself in our country. In no other way could the memory of Lincoln have been more fittingly honored.

King Edward's Visit to Berlin.

So long as King Edward sits on the throne of England there will be no war with Germany if he can help it. Too good a ruler to let his country have enemies, he never allows international suspicion to develop into settled hostility. If there is dissatisfaction among the Boers, he recommends pacific measures for them; if there is tension with France, he encourages an *entente*; if conflict with Russia threatens, he goes to see the Czar. Then follows conciliation and the dark clouds of international trouble give place to sunshine. Rightly has Edward VII. been called the peacemaker, "a king among diplomats and a diplomat among kings." We hope he